

## **Request for Proposals: Gulf State Park Lodge and Meeting Space**

**published: September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

### Introduction

On behalf of the Governor of Alabama and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the University of Alabama System is issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) in relation to the development of a Lodge and Meeting Space for Gulf State Park in Baldwin County, Alabama.

### Narrative Overview

As one of Alabama's most cherished assets, Gulf State Park preserves more than 6,000 acres of coastal scenery and wildlife habitat on the historic Alabama Gulf Coast. Adjoining the cities of Orange Beach and Gulf Shores, the park features spectacular views of natural freshwater lakes, preserved wilderness areas, and white sand beaches along the Gulf of Mexico. It is a popular family destination for many residents within Alabama, the United States, and the world.

In 2004, Hurricane Ivan and in 2005, Hurricane Katrina caused major damage to both the park facilities and landscape. The storms devastated the park's woodlands, blowing down trees and inundating lowland areas with saltwater. Remediation efforts, including reforestation and prescribed burns to deal with the effects of these storms, have since been made. Also as a result of these storms, the park's beachfront lodge, inshore campgrounds, and fishing pier were damaged or destroyed. A beach pavilion and fishing and education pier have subsequently been built.

To add to these setbacks, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill detrimentally affected the park's unique ecosystem, coastline, and the large number of visitors to the Alabama Gulf Coast. Scientists are still assessing the effects of the millions of gallons of oil that flooded into the Gulf after the explosion of BP's Deepwater Horizon oil rig.

While these events have created a need for revitalization and recovery, they also present a unique opportunity to define the future of Gulf State Park. It will need to be supportive of maintaining and expanding growth in visitors while preserving the resources that make the area inviting. A comprehensive approach to future development will allow for consideration of cost efficient solutions to any infrastructure issues and environmental restoration.

The Gulf State Park Enhancement Project has been proposed as an early restoration project of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Natural Resource Damage Assessment process (<http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration/early-restoration/phase-iii/>). This project would provide ecologically-sensitive enhancements to Gulf State Park, a 6,150-acre park located in Baldwin County, Alabama and operated by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The project consists of five components:

- **Rebuilding the Gulf State Park Lodge and Conference Center** as a "green" overnight stay and meeting facility that will improve public access to the park's beaches, trails, freshwater ecosystems and other natural resources, as well as serve as a model of resilient, environmentally friendly coastal development. The reconstruction will occur within the footprint of the original lodge and conference center.
- **Ecological Restoration and Enhancement of Degraded Dune Habitat** to restore approximately 50 acres of dunes in the park through creation of sand movement corridors at strategic locations to allow for the natural buildup of dunes. Additionally, native vegetative plantings, possibly including sea oats, sand oats, or seaside bluestem, would be utilized to stabilize dunes and promote increased dune coverage.
- Building an **Interpretive Center** which would include meeting space and classrooms as well as indoor and outdoor exhibits devoted to promoting better public understanding of the valuable natural resource services provided by Alabama's coastal ecosystems.
- Building a **Research and Education Center** adjacent to the existing nature center in the park to expand the park's research and education programs and which would include classrooms and laboratories to support a year round program of K-12 environmental education.

- **Visitor Enhancements** which improve the visitor experience by expanding walking, cycling, or running opportunities in the park through construction of approximately 9.5 miles of new trails and approximately 3.5 miles of enhancements to existing park trails.

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and the associated response activities, resulted in the loss of a large number of beach, boating, and fishing visits to the Alabama Gulf Coast's natural resources. This project is designed to partially compensate for these losses by improving the public's access and enjoyment of the Gulf State Park's natural resources, enhancing public understanding of Alabama's valuable coastal ecosystems, and restoring degraded dune habitat in the park.

As a component of the Gulf State Park Enhancement Project, the Lodge and Meeting Space will become a signature element within a comprehensive plan for Gulf State Park. It will need to play a strong supporting role in creating a Gulf State Park that realizes the overall vision statement for this revitalized state park:

*Gulf State Park will be an international benchmark of economic and environmental sustainability demonstrating best practices for outdoor recreation, education, and hospitable accommodations.*

## Project Scope

### *Overview*

The selected firm or team will provide design services for the Lodge and Meeting Space component of Gulf State Park. The timing of these services will overlap with the creation of a Master Plan for Gulf State Park. The selected firm or team is expected to coordinate their efforts with the masterplanning team who will also be responsible for the open space design of the Lodge and Meeting Space.

For the purposes of this RFP, assume the Gulf State Park Lodge and Meeting Space will accommodate 350 guest rooms or suites and a meeting space for 1,500 people. The design should be undertaken with the goal of certification under the LEED or Living Building Challenge programs in order to minimize the facility's impact on the environment and establish it as a model for regionally appropriate coastal zone design. The selected firm or team will begin the process by providing programming services to refine a proposed facility program (below) in support of the Master Plan for Gulf State Park. That firm or team will then develop the program through a standard design process that results in a complete set of construction documents for ONLY the Lodge and Meeting Space. The selected firm or team will also provide architectural Construction Administration services for the Lodge and Meeting Space ONLY.

### *Proposed Program*

An independent consulting firm is preparing a feasibility study separately. That study uses the following characteristics for the site and facility. These characteristics may be altered as a result of the feasibility study or the design process that results from this RFP. For the purposes of developing a response to this RFP, teams should assume:

- 350 rooms or suites
- meeting space for 1,500 people
- on-site parking for guests and meeting attendees
- full service lodge with associated amenities and services
- a full service restaurant that serves lodge guests and meeting attendees
- a national reservation system

### *Site*

The defined site for the Lodge and Meeting Space is a parcel located on a sandy beach on the Gulf of Mexico. (See Appendices A and B.) The site was previously occupied by a lodge and meeting space that was severely damaged during Hurricane Ivan in 2004 and Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Immediately adjacent to the site is the largest fishing and education pier on the Gulf of Mexico. The site is surrounded by environmentally sensitive areas.

The design of the Lodge and Meeting Space will consider a layout that incorporates low-impact and sustainable best practices resulting in a resilient facility that contributes to the environmental and economic sustainability of the project. It will also include

pedestrian connections to Gulf State Park, interpretive facilities, the beach, and other visitor amenities within Gulf State Park. Those connections will be coordinated with the masterplanning team.

This RFP does NOT include requests for construction management or general contracting services.

The firm will work with The University of Alabama System's Gulf State Park Project Team. This team is acting on behalf of the Governor of Alabama and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to realize the stated vision for Gulf State Park.

The process will be interactive and will require consistent, effective communication between the firm and client.

See the RFP's appendices for more information related to existing site conditions and the overall vision for Gulf State Park.

### Professional Experience

Firms or teams that respond to this RFP are expected to have significant experience in the following areas. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive but instead demonstrate the breadth and type of experiences expected.

- Programming
- Project Scheduling and Phasing
- Hospitality Architecture
- Hotel Layout and Interior Design
- Communications
- Construction Administration
- Visual Presentations
- Low-Impact Design or comparable sustainable practices
- LEED, SITES, Living Building, or similar environmental rating systems
- Design for resiliency

### Submittal

#### *Content*

#### - Introduction:

Provide a brief narrative describing your understanding of the project, your firm or team's perspective on it, and any other information you would like to highlight.

#### - Firm or Team Description:

Provide a broad explanation and history of your firm or team. For team responses, in addition to the individual firm descriptions, describe any previous collaboration and note collaborative projects.

#### - Team Structure and Bios:

Describe the organizational structure for this project and provide bios for individual team members. Identify the project manager and the roles of each team member. Describe their relevant experience as well as their role on this project.

#### - Process Description:

Describe a potential approach that your firm or team may take to this project. Use this section as an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the project. Do NOT describe a standard process, but rather a customized approach that results in a Lodge and Meeting Space that reflects the existing conditions, goals, and vision for Gulf State Park. Explain how your firm or team would execute that approach and how your team structure supports that methodology. Illustrate your process using whatever method is appropriate including infographics and existing project examples. It is NOT necessary to develop a schematic proposal for the plan of the Gulf State Park Lodge and Meeting Space.

#### - Fee Structure:

Provide an understanding of your fee schedule and an estimate of your cost for this project. These estimates may be presented as a range. Prior to the final firm selection, the scope of work will be finalized and the fee structure negotiated.

#### - Project Examples:

Include a minimum of 4 project examples per firm that demonstrate your capacity and experience in the expected professional services. Select examples that address how you handled complex challenges in highly visible situations and identify individual team members that are also proposed for the Gulf State Park Project. Include references for each project with name and current contact information.

### *Evaluation Criteria*

- Demonstrated understanding of the scope of the project
- Previous experience with projects of similar complexity and scale
- Ability to clearly and completely explain a potential process for designing the Lodge and Meeting Space
- Team composition and appropriate levels of experience
- Quality of RFP submittal and interview presentation

### *Format*

Coil bound 8-1/2" x 11" – landscape or portrait format (There is a 12 page limitation on proposals not including appendices with project examples, references, and other supporting materials. Clarity through brevity and conciseness is expected in achieving a complete package.)

6 printed copies

1 digital pdf (CD or Flash Drive)

### *Send to*

The University of Alabama System  
Gulf State Park Project  
Attn: Cooper Shattuck  
500 University Boulevard East  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

### *Questions and Clarifications*

Email questions to [info@gsp.ua.edu](mailto:info@gsp.ua.edu)

Subject line should read: Questions for GSPP Lodge and Meeting Space RFP

Questions and answers as well as clarifications will be posted to [www.gulfstateparkproject.ua.edu](http://www.gulfstateparkproject.ua.edu)

No phone calls please.

### Project Schedule

RFP Released	September 17 <sup>th</sup>
Deadline for RFP Submittal	October 17 <sup>th</sup> (received by close of business, not postmarked)
Firms selected for Interviews	November
Interviews	November

### Appendices

- A: Site Maps
- B: Current Project Commitments
- C: Gulf State Park Vision Document



## **Request for Proposals: Gulf State Park Lodge and Meeting Space**

### **APPENDIX A: SITE MAPS**

These maps are taken from the “Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill: Programmatic and Phase III Early Restoration Plan and Early Restoration Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.”

The document may be found online at: <http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration/early-restoration/phase-iii/>

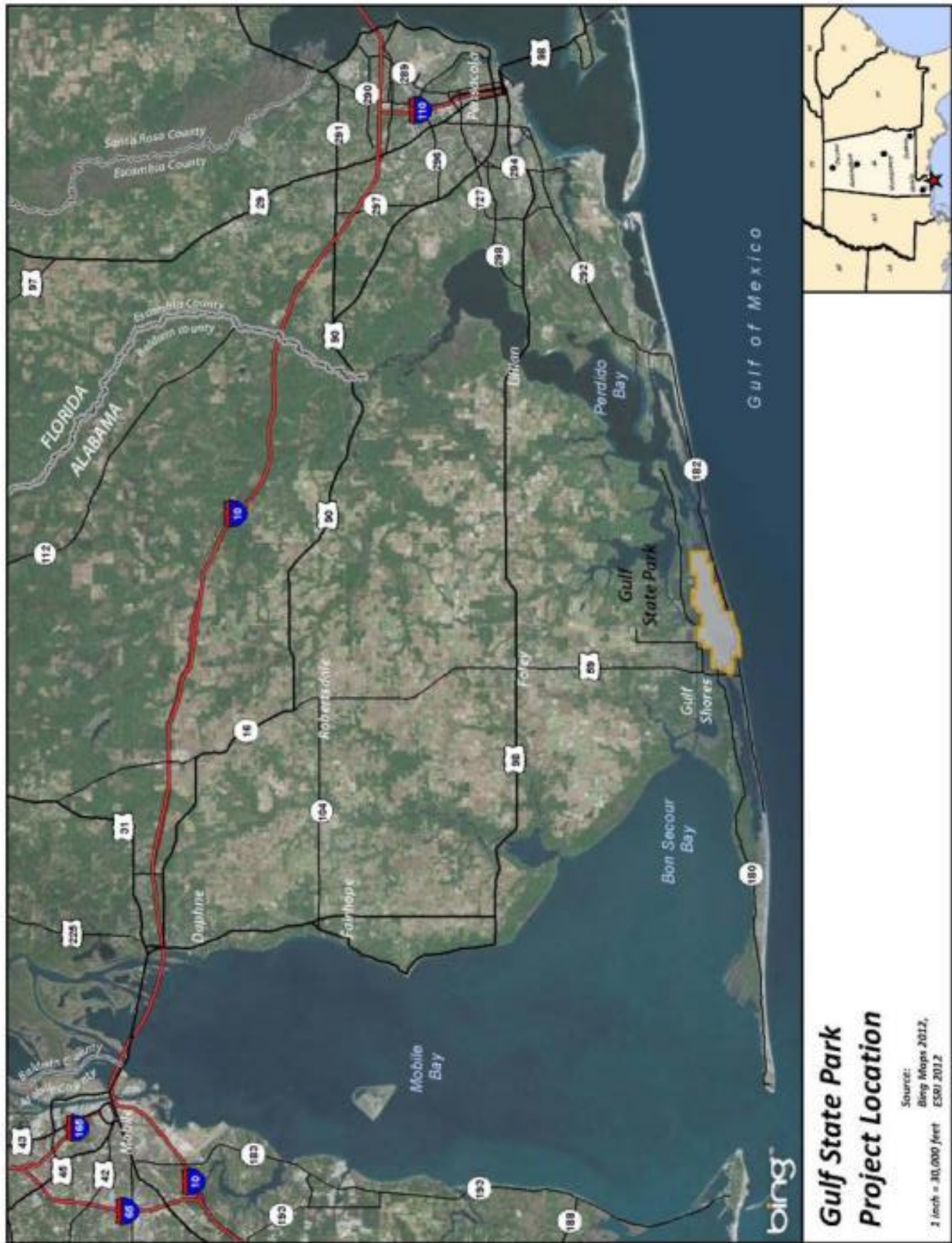






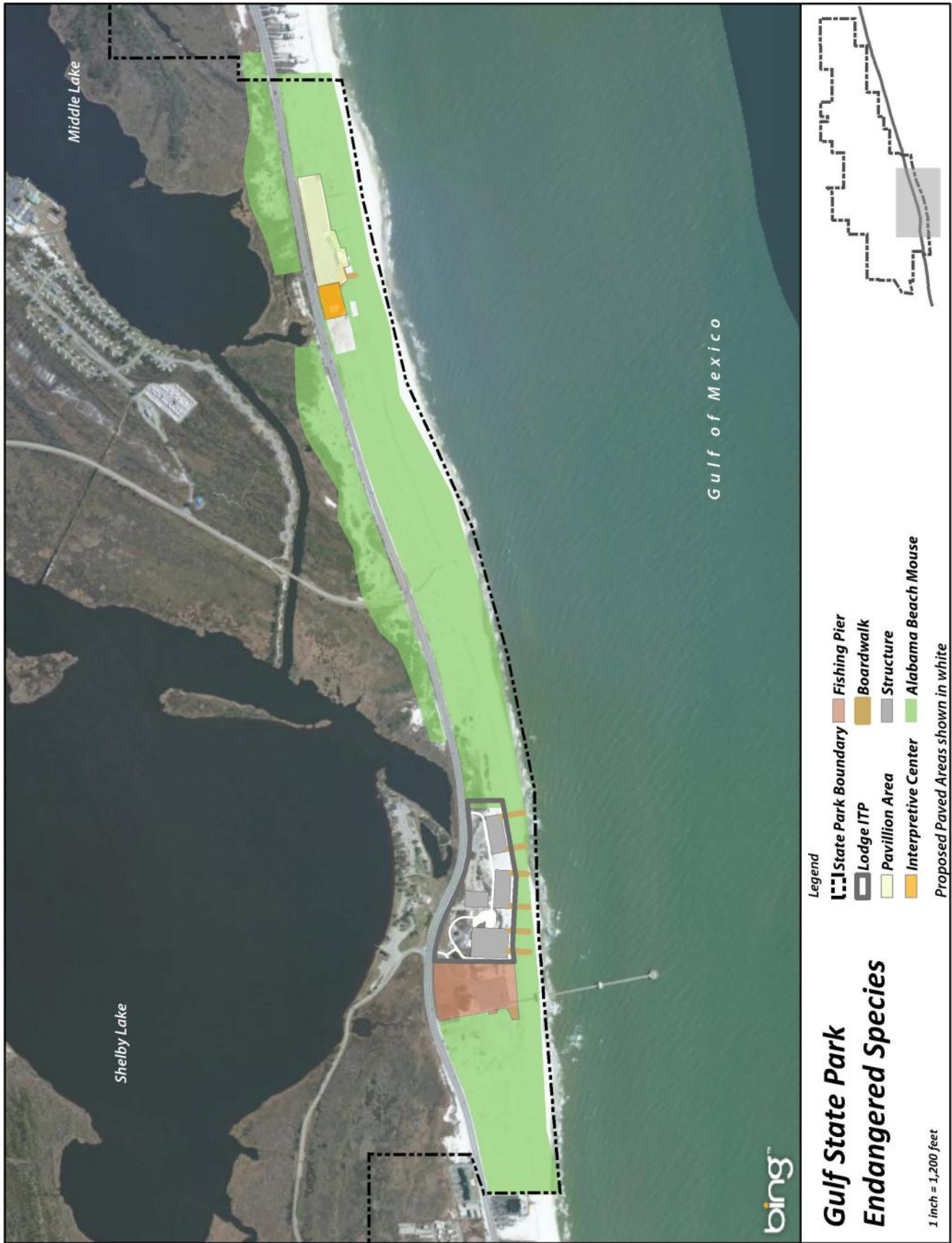
Figure 11-21. Location of Alabama Beach Mouse critical habitat.



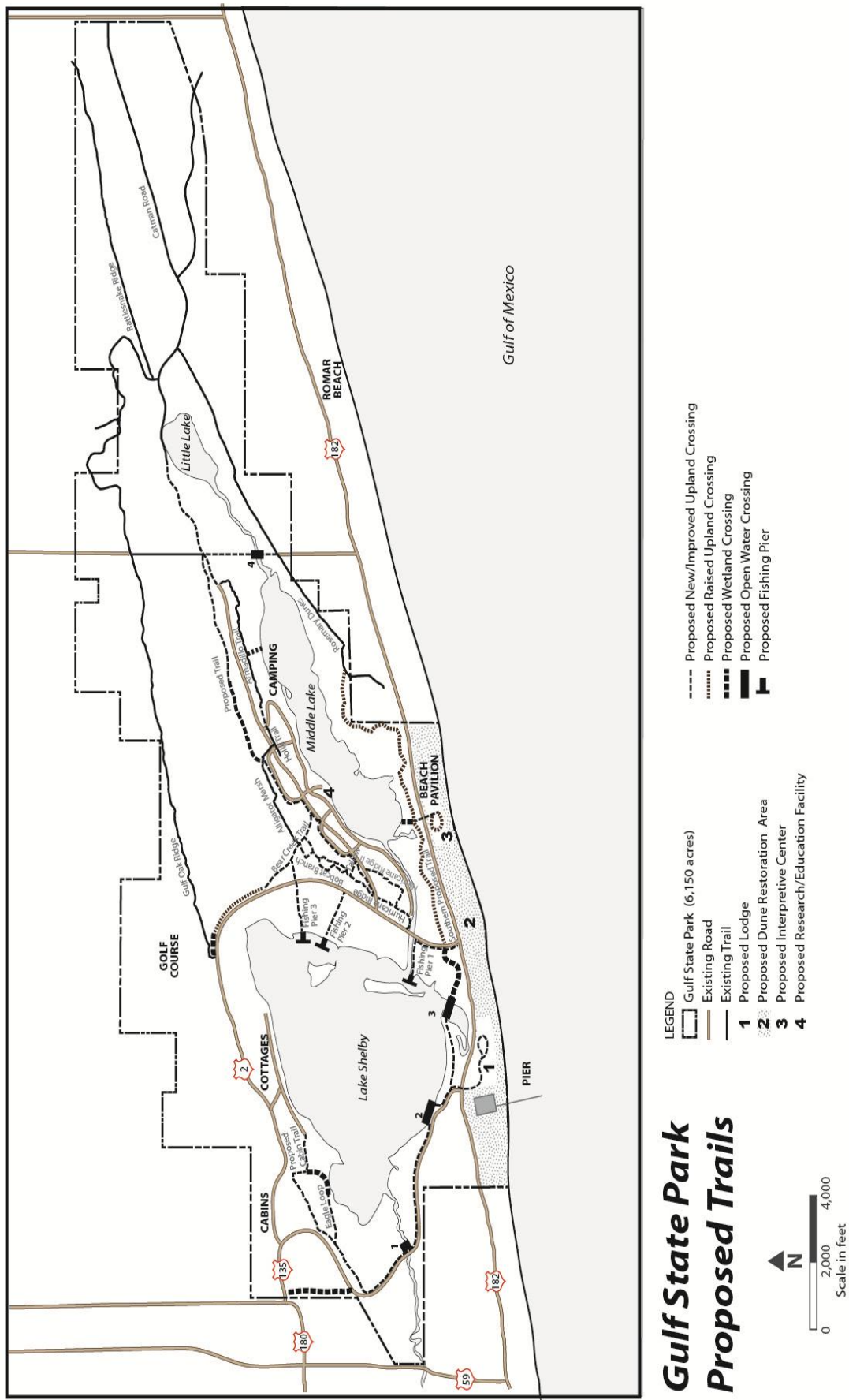




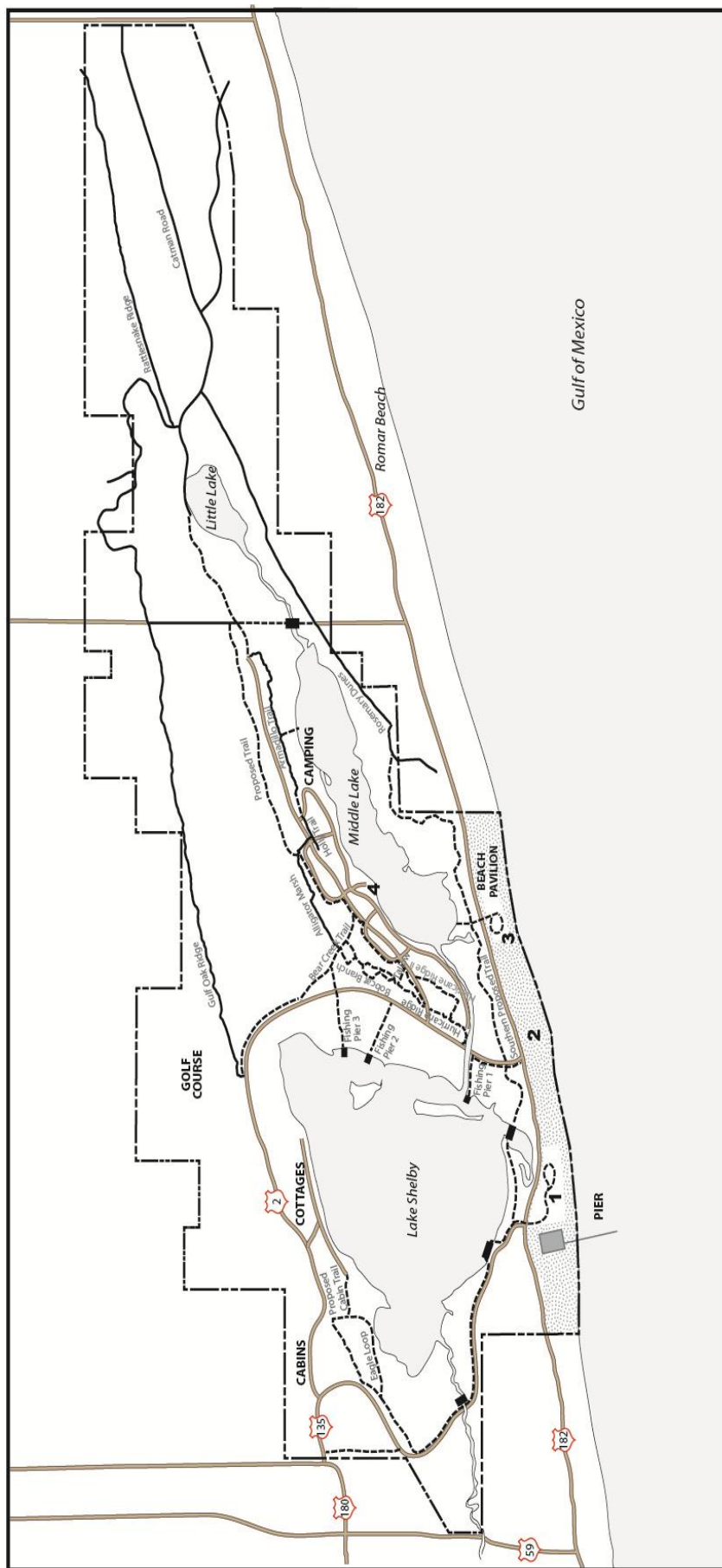
**Figure 11-20. Jurisdictional wetlands in Gulf State Park.**



**Figure 11-13. Dune enhancement action area.**







**Figure 11-10. Project element locations.**





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### **APPENDIX B: CURRENT PERMIT COMMITMENTS**

Current permit commitments can be found at [www.alabamacoastalrestoration.org/nrdaSupportingDocumentation.aspx](http://www.alabamacoastalrestoration.org/nrdaSupportingDocumentation.aspx)

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### **APPENDIX C: GULF STATE PARK VISION DOCUMENT**

(Download as separate file found at <http://www.gulfstateparkproject.ua.edu/rfp>.)